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Did CIA Nix Miami-Haiti Smuggling Trial?

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WASHINGTON — The prosecution of a successful conspiracy to smuggle two fighter-bombers to Dictator Francois Duvalier's regime in Haiti has been stymied because a key witness is being withheld by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The essential witness is a former CIA operative.

The concern expressed by the government is that his testimony in court might embarrass the intelligence agency and possibly expose part of its worldwide activities.

Involved in the plot, which ended with the arrival in Haiti last September of the two surplus planes, are several U.S. pilots and plane deal-

ers, the president of the Bank of Haiti, the Haitian finance minister and Rudolph Baboun, Haiti consul general in Miami.

In the past month, three more unlicensed aircraft have been smuggled from the U.S. into Haiti, but no more T28s which are small, 300 m.p.h., propeller-driven trainers that can be adapted to anti-guer-

rilla warfare. Duvalier is reliably reported to be willing to pay for still more plane deliveries, and federal officials are investigating a series of smuggling operations in the making.

Law enforcement officials had built a complete case against the smugglers, but it was dropped at the request of the State Department in a seeming reversal of its own

policy. The department, it turned out, was acting at the request of the CIA.

The CIA has refused all comment on the T28 case and on the failure to press the prosecution of Baboun and the U.S. citizens involved in the smuggling operation.

Smuggling attempts have centered mostly in Florida, but Haitian agents have

ranged as far as Texas, Arizona and California in efforts to purchase T28s and get them flown to Haiti — with or without the required Munitions Control Act export license which can be issued only by the State Department.

The government has evidence that the pilots of the two T28s now in Haiti were

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